

Watering Newly Planted Trees

For new trees, water immediately after you plant a tree.

Watering Trees During the First Two Years

During the first couple of growing seasons, your newly planted tree is expending a lot of energy trying to get its roots established in the soil. Especially during the first few summers of your new tree's life, it will have a difficult time dealing with heat and drought. You can make this easier by providing water and covering the soil with wood-chip mulch. Deep watering can help speed the root establishment. Deep watering consists of keeping the soil moist to a depth that includes all the roots.

Watering Trees After the First Two Years

After your tree has been established in your yard for two years, the roots will be established. This will allow your tree to withstand a wider range of water conditions on its own because it has a proper root structure.

How Much Water and When

Not enough water is harmful for the tree, but too much water is bad as well. Over-watering is a common tree care mistake. Please note that moist is different than soggy, and you can judge this by feel. A damp soil that dries for a short period will allow adequate oxygen to permeate the soil.

As a rule of thumb your soil should be moist. Usually 30 seconds with a steady stream of water from a garden hose with a diffuser nozzle per tree seedling is sufficient. Mulching is also key in retaining moisture in the soil.

You can check soil moisture by using a garden trowel and inserting it into the ground to a depth of 2 inches. Move the blade of the trowel back and forth to create a small narrow trench. Then use your finger to touch the soil. If it is moist to the touch, then they do not need water.